



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0383CO-1 for Mapleton Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This is an 8,000 student district on the outskirts of Denver that has been working on its own for the past decade on an individualized student learning program that has involved closing all of its schools, and replacing them with school designs include Expeditionary Learning, Big Picture Company, Early College, International Baccalaureate, Montessori, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), Back to Basics, and Coalition of Essential Schools. Students and parents can elect to enroll in any school they wish. This desire is backed up with free bus transportation. Despite the fact that the district's free lunch population has grown by 32% and their EL population has grown by 20%, the test score tables contained in the application show that the schools have been making progress in all academic areas, and with other critical data such as graduation rates steadily for the past 4 years. Their approach, which is centered around lengthening the school year so that it is comparable to most other school districts, and offering year-round schools with intersessions so that students can explore many more personal interests is highly credible and is already -- according to the academic progress displays in the application -- bearing fruit.</p> <p>They also have been working to satisfy the four core educational assurance areas: e.g.,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> They have developed programs using the International Baccalaureate Program model, and a model that permits high school students to complete two years of college courses while they are still in high school that exceed the standards of nearly all American high schools. They have build data systems that follow students throughout their school careers and to which students, parents and teachers have access. They recruit, train and reward effective teachers by competing all open teaching positions (disregarding "administrative placement" candidates, offering the opportunity to teacher 11 months a year, and the opportunities to explore special interests through teaching highly personalized intersession courses. They have also configured principalships as "director" positions with the authority to hire, fire and make many decisions that would otherwise be reserved for central office senior staff. They have also turned around low-performing schools by giving each school a special theme and permitting parents to send their children to any of the districts' schools with free transportation being provided. 		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application is exemplary in that all students in the district are included in the implementation plan. Students and parents can elect to enroll in any of the schools they wish (see A-1) and free bus transportation is provided. The only students who do not participate in this design are those in a charter and private school operated by the district.</p> <p>A full description of each of the participating schools is included in the application and with the number of students and staff in each school.</p> <p>The plan is now going into its second decade of implementation and its unique culture -- which is centered around permitting every student to enroll in a school which is a close fit for the students' interests and learning styles -- appears to have been embraced by students, parents and teachers alike. The wide range of choices which includes accelerated learning, IB programs, Montessori programs, and at least 8 other choices, offers programs to fit almost every parental vision of excellence.</p>		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan for LEA-wide reform and change is embodied in the Logic Model that ties all the elements together and in the text. It links what it feels to be the most critical needs of the district (summer learning loss, current calendar, sufficient instructional time, etc.) with the activities and outputs which the proposal feels will help to resolve these difficulties and then with the outcomes that will signify whether these activities and outputs will be judged to be successful. The development of this model and its presentation in a single page is a strong indicator that this project has been carefully thought through.</p> <p>The fact that most critical elements plan (such as free choice of school and free transportation) is already scaled up to include virtually all students and staff is evidence of the fact that this project is likely to be successful.</p> <p>Additional evidence of the quality of this approach is provided by its administrative model that has replaced traditional principals with program directors with full power to hire both within and outside the district; and the teacher evaluation system has test scores as a sizable component. These are very strong and sound approaches to reform that the literature indicates has every likelihood of leading to even more successful academic outcomes in the future such as higher test scores, improved graduation rates and more students going on to college.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Based on the levels of success enjoyed by other districts that have employed some of these strategies, it is highly likely that the District's key summative goals of realizing a 5% annual improvement on the TCAP examination will be able to be achieved. It is also likely that the goals of decreasing achievement gaps, and increasing graduation rates and college enrollments will be realized too. Last year the district achieved an almost unheard-of achievement in a low SES district when every graduating senior applied to at least one college and all but a handful had at least one acceptances. Thus the goals and objectives seems to be ambitious but with a very good chance of being achieved. Growth at the 5% level on the TCAP, and other indicators such as graduation rates and college enrollments, far exceeds the State ESEA targets for the LEA, overall and by student subgroups.</p>		

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	15
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Not unexpectedly, when the district reorganized itself into small schools with specific themes, test results suffered for a few years; this has been the experience, as set forth in the literature, of virtually every reform effort with the scope and breadth of this one. However the TCAP tables in the application show that in the past four years the scores have been climbing steadily upwards, despite a more challenging school population and severe budget setbacks which reduced the number of instructional days.</p> <p>The TCAP data provides convincing evidence that the innovations and restructuring that have already been put in place are working. This is especially true among lower-performing students where the TCAP gains are particularly impressive. Also, it is both noteworthy and impressive that the district makes test results available to citizens and parents that are disaggregated by program, ethnicity, gender, special education status, EL status and in several other different ways.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The exhibits contained in the application shows that the district already has full transparency regarding test scores, school-based budget with actual salaries for instructional staff and teachers, and related expenditures such as the cost of support staff and nonpersonnel related expenses.

They also go beyond these minimum levels by advertising all teaching positions with and outside the district, and giving school directors (principals) permission to hire from outside applicants with no pressure to fill positions from within.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The application cites Colorado state law to attest that Colorado is a "local control state." This provides the district with sufficient autonomy and successful control over district functions including hiring, curriculum and structure, since these are reserved for the Board of Education and the Superintendent of the district to manage. Because the restructuring of the schools has been in effect for more than 5 years, the state has already endorsed all of the district's innovations. Letters from the State Board of Education, local congress persons and a senator endorse the district's approach to personalized learning environments.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The letters of support included verbatim in the Appendix, show that virtually all of the innovations related to the restructuring of the district have already been approved by parents, teachers, administrators, and their professional organizations. The innovations that will be introduced throughout Race to the Top funding are a year round schedule with 3 optional intersessions and a total school year (if a student enrolls in all intersessions) of 203 days. These major innovations are also endorsed by letters included in the application. According to the application, teacher support was indicated through the participation of teachers and teacher groups in many of the planning activities leading up to the development of this application, and the signatures of the teacher organization representatives with the application.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The chronology of events that led up to this application, starting with the district's decision to reconstitute of all of its schools as small learning communities, provides a convincing and full description of the events that have transpired in the last 10 years during which these innovations have been introduced, the logic behind the reform proposals, and the needs and gaps that remain to be fulfilled. Data are presented in the form of the TCAP to support the chronology and the identifications of needs and gaps. One point has been deducted because the only test scores that have been presented are based on TCAP results rather than on a wider variety of measures. However this is not required under State law or regulations, and given the dire financial circumstances under which the district has been functioning, it is not surprising that the remedy for this problem (wider breadth of summative and formative measures) will have to await the funding of this application. The application lists 7 additional measures which the district is considering using with the funds that the grant will provide.

The plan set forth in this and related sections is indeed high quality because it discusses the key goals of the project (e.g., to build upon their present successes by extending the academic year to 203 days, including optional intersessions); it describes the activities to be taken to satisfy these goals; it provides a detailed timeline; it specifies the deliverables and the persons responsible for each. Further, because of the activities they have already undertaken successfully (e.g., converting to a system of small learning communities) their approach is highly credible.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The fact that the district's high school program for all students is centered around providing parents and students with genuine choices about the kind of high school education they wish to receive (IB, acceleration, etc.) with all paths leading to all students being qualified and applying to college, is the most effective way of which this evaluator is aware of ensuring that parents and students "buy in" to their high school program. These program are a highly effective way of assuring deep learning experiences and involving all students in goal setting, teamwork etc. The open enrollment strategy also assures that students are exposed to a much wider cultural experience than is the case with neighborhood schools, where the cross-section of attending students is much more limited.

Further all students are exposed to instructional sequences and an approach to learning than can be obtained if all students are assigned by neighborhood to schools; and if the schools themselves following the same curricula and approach regardless of where the students attend school. The small schools approach also permits "high-need" to be much more than an enveloping label; rather it permits different kinds of needs to be addressed in the most suitable learning environments.

The application's plan under this grant also provides for every student to receive individualized supplementary experiences, by providing even more personalized intersession programming, and by lengthening the school year by about 20% if students opt to attend all intersessions. Intersession staffing would be set at 20:1; another way of assuring more personalization and meeting individual student needs.

The fact that all graduating seniors applied last year to at least one college and nearly all were accepted is important evidence to support the fact that they are well along the path for meeting these objectives related to higher education. Also at least one of the small schools offered structured college readiness programs begin in middle school; and York International IB School is one of 37 schools in the US to offer a primary IB program. This is very impressive since the best prediction of future success is previous success. The innovations introduced through this project (such as intersessions and the extended year) are high predictors of future success.

Use of iPads purchased before this grant application was even written is also impressive; highlight the district's dedication to high tech learning experiences even if the grant is not approved. These capabilities will be extended to include even more effective feedback to parents via the iPads when the existing student information systems are extended to support ongoing inquiries on the parts of parents and students.

These evidences of prior success bode well for their success. The intersessions, the extended school years and the lower student-teacher ratios during the intersessions are strategies for using the grant funds to magnify the districts' successes for the years that will follow.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	20
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Mapleton's teaching staff average 7 years of experience, but the district also offers good support for newcomers. This is attested to in section (C)(2) where they list the average tenure of teachers in the district along with their descriptions of their support programs that include demonstration classrooms, the assignment of mentors, and their use of professional learning communities to support less experienced teachers.

Their effective use of professional learning communities extending to every school in district is also evidence of their commitment to training staff in state-of-the-art techniques. Other strengths include school directors' use of instructional rounds on a daily basis; and the use of demonstration classrooms for new and struggling teachers is also a positive aspect of their program which has already been implemented. Other effective measures that they are already employing include tying in-service training to student test results; and training all teachers to use iPads with their students --even though many have not received tablets for their classes -- is another example that the district has stayed ahead of the staff learning curve.

The application provides evidence of their having created a high-quality learning plan that is very likely to be successful. As noted earlier, the fact that last year every graduating student had applied to at least one college, and the fact that nearly all of them had at least one acceptances, is evidence that all the components of the district's plan are leading to students' increasing success.

The application describes fully how resources, training and curricula is being tied into the specific learning communities to which each student belongs. Again, the key to their success are truly individualized learning environments to which the students, teachers, parents and community subscribes; and the courage the district has show in permitting both parents and teachers with genuine meaningful choices.

By providing more instructional days and intersessions, teachers wall receive more instruction from highly engaged and

competent teachers who will receive additional compensation for these teacher days. The applications states that although the district has an incentive plan to place hard-to-find teachers, they have never had to use the plan and they have ample numbers of qualified teacher candidates for every position.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal commits to making Race to the Top the district's central priority for the next 4 years. It stipulates that all senior administrative staff will check on implementation every month at all schools. There will also be a R2T director-level position reporting to an Assistant Superintendent. By organizing the district's support structure around the individual schools that have budgeting, hiring and planning authority over their individual programs, the district is going a long way towards assuring that the individual programs have the flexibility and resources they need to be successful.</p> <p>It states that students in grades 1-10 will be given opportunities to demonstrate their mastery of objectives to adults other than their teachers; research cites that this is among the most effective strategies for ensuring that students aren't left behind. It also states that 11-12th graders can earn credits based on ACT score and other measures; this enhances individual learning opportunities by permitting students to take advantage of distance learning opportunities or simply reading ahead in their texts, rather than having to put in the "seat time" that does little more in some instances than assuring teachers' classes will be filled.</p> <p>The applications specifies that the approach to allow students with disabilities to succeed in these exceptionally diverse small learning communities is one that employs highly personalized approaches and instruction. However all of the most commonly used core academic materials are tested on ELL students before they are incorporated into the programs and all are intended for use with high-need populations.</p> <p>The proposal states that additional feedback will be providing by empowering students and parents to "vote with their feet" and withdraw from schools in which they are dissatisfied in order to pursue their educations in a wide variety of alternative settings. Again this is probably the most effective means for ensuring that students' education match their needs and their parents' desires.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district's plan ensures that all participating students (which in this case includes all the students in the district except for those in one charter and one private school) have access to the necessary content, tools and other learning resources they need. It also provides assurances that all stakeholder groups have access to resources and technical support; and data systems and other technological support mechanisms that will enhance their chances of being successful.</p> <p>The fact that virtually every student is benefiting to an equal degree under this plan helps to provide these assurances.</p> <p>The district includes a weighted formula for allocating resources, thus assuring that the resources follow the students that have the most need for them. However, the application notes that special needs students are so evenly distributed among campuses that funding differences are quite minimal. This is "the best of all worlds" in terms of the allocation of the district's resources.</p> <p>The school-level budget figures that are provided testify that with the exception of extraordinary items that are inherent in some school's design (e.g., paying IB examination fees for students at the international baccalaureate school), resources and infrastructure are already distributed even-handedly.</p> <p>Situating a public library on a campus with 5 of its 16 schools is also evidence of effective designs for infrastructure, as well as for sound planning and financing practices that extend beyond the school district's budget. Providing IT training for all teachers in using Apple equipment is another strong point and is an example of innovations in effective use of infrastructure that have proceeded this grant application. The Download My Data feature of the district website that will inform parents and students of their progress on summative and formative examinations is also an example of an effective use of data to support personalized learning.</p>		

According to the application, the district uses a unified database to which parents and students have remote access called Infinite Campus.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district's plan is indeed of high quality and encompasses a variety of features (school choice, open enrollment, free transportation, transparent budgeting and staffing, managerial choice in budgeting and hiring, and a longer academic year) that are all strong predictors of academic success; and constitute a high quality plan. The emphasis on providing "regular, actionable feedback" through regularly scheduled team meetings at every school is evidence of the district's commitment to continuous improvement.</p> <p>Another far-reaching commitment to continuous improvement is the district's willingness to provide transportation for each student to any school or program. This is one of the "acid tests" of a district's commitment to meeting the need of its parents and students. As noted earlier, this permits students and parents to "vote with their feet" should any of the programs bog down.</p> <p>Another example of this is permitting school directors to fill openings from outside, as well as inside, the school district and therefore obtain the most qualified staff at any given time. This practice which is fairly rare in American education, allow a program's needs to prevail in cases where existing staff members are not adequate for the tasks at hand.</p> <p>The summative evaluation data and the budgeting data included in this application attests that the information/data systems already in place are adequate for this program's needs, and the enhancements for which the application requests support (such as providing parent progress information online) will make this already superior system even more effective.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application states that ongoing communications and engagement is accomplished by permitting each school to pursue its own plan in concert with the faculty, parents and students that support school's vision; and by scheduling senior staff to do external progress reviews monthly both on-site and at district headquarters. Open communications of plans, budgets and testing also foster ongoing communications and engagements; as do students choosing the design of school that they and their parents wish for them to attend.</p> <p>The application provides a highly entrepreneurial model that facilitates continuous improvement by combining local school-level control with monthly senior management oversight. All campuses are competing with each other for students; and changes in enrollment will inevitably lead to changes in staffing and the available resources. This gives every school community strong reasons for wanting to be successful and for optimizing their operations before achievement data and/or parent satisfaction decline.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application includes a detailed set of performance measures, broken down by population subgroups and grade levels, that detail the number and percentages of participating students for the baseline year 2011-2012, as well as projections for the next 5 years. Some of these tables are also broken down by the numbers and percents of teachers and principals who are likely to be assessed as effective. These tables include both summative and formative measures, as well as performance indicators.</p> <p>Based on the experiences of similar "lighthouse" school districts that have developed programs with many of these same features, these targets are ambitious but are likely to be achieved with the assistance of this grant.</p> <p>The plan exceeds the prerequisite number of 12-14 performance measures; the ones that are selected are sufficient</p>		

to assess the degrees to which successful implementation is achieved.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The effectiveness of the academic aspects of the program will be assessed through the wide variety of measures and practices already commented upon above.

According to the application, intersessions will be assessed via survey data. This is a sufficient and cost-effective means for assessing programs only a few weeks in length and likely to be continuously improved (or discarded) each time they are offered.

School design implementation will be assessed, according to the proposal, by design development team members acting in concert with the school design staff and verified through student achievement data. Having evaluations be carried out by a joint group of designers and stakeholders (teachers and students) is a highly effective means for improving effectiveness each time a program is offered.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Budget range for 5-10K students is \$10-20 million. Only 10% of the budget is allocated for indirect costs, which tends to be on the low side (a beneficial feature of the budget) for public school districts. The total budget for the full 4 years less funds from other sources equals, exactly \$20 million.</p> <p>The emphasis on lengthening the school year through activities selected by kids and parents (school and intersession choices) is likely to be successful or have very little downside risk. The costs of iPads and similar technologies will likely be minimized, or purchases will be accelerated, through use of the iPad Minis and competing devices on other platforms, which cost about 50% less and are probably even more suited to student use. Fees will support implementation of Mapleton Early College's Early College program, whereby students receive high school and associate's degree concurrently. This strategy may provide benefits to parents worth \$20,000-\$40,000 per student. Participation in the IB program can provide similar financial benefits.</p> <p>Overall, the budget appears reasonable for all that the project is expected to accomplish. This appears to be a very cost-effective investment of federal funds because so many aspects of the project have already proven to be successful; and the likelihood for this program meeting its intended objectives is very high.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>According to the application, sustainability is likely to be assured by being able to attract students from neighboring districts that will bring additional funding into the district since the sending districts will have to pay for the district costs for these students. By the time a 203-day school year has been in effect for several years, it is likely to be viewed by the district's taxpayers as a distinctive feature of their schools that they are willing to fund. The reviewer feels that this is a realistic assumption because once a school district switches to a new schedule, they seldom return to the former one. This gives the project a very good chance of being sustainable.</p> <p>Strategies for funding intersessions through external grants and organizations is likely to be effective if the increases in test scores and behavior goals are achieved. This is a very exciting project and one that is likely to get considerable support from external sources.</p> <p>However, the ultimate sustainability of this project will only come about if after the federal funding is gone, the citizens of the school district decide that the additional tax money needed to support a 200+ day is a worthy investment of their education dollars. Given that they will be receiving a customized education for each child, it is likely they will opt to continue funding</p>		

this level of effort.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The application includes partnering arrangements with 2 external non-profit organizations, Invest With Kids and Community Reach, to better meet the mental health and socio-emotional needs of the district's students. These funds will go towards providing support for parents, students and teachers and therapists providing in-school services. It also describes in a matrix on pages 172-173 seven different performance measures and methods that it intends to use for dealing with behavioral referrals that cross into the community. The application states that these organizations will also help train school staff to deal with problems related to family, school and community engagement, as well as with some educational needs.

The application describes how aggregate data for all children in the district is tracked on the District's Infinite Campus data system and how these data will be used in School Support Team meetings within each school to address problems unique to different sets of students.

The applications notes that if this project proves successful, its features should be able to be extended to other districts in the Denver area that -- thanks to the district's 40% mobility rate -- start to notice the differences these strategies make in the manner in which schools are structured and conducted and have to cope with parents who are likely to start demanding similar strategies services in their new districts. Further, the design is likely to become parts of at least Colorado's reform efforts, and it should be able to be extended *in toto* to other small districts in other states that can take advantage of the fact that they a much more flexible and know their parents better than most of their larger, better funded, urban counterparts.

Implicit in the application is the assumption that if other small districts that surround Denver and have similar students and parents start to see the benefits of this approach to individualized learning, they will adopt many of its features and strategies as the school district becomes a lighthouse district for the surrounding area.

The potential for other communities to adopt this model is great. While many school districts give lip service to small schools and individualized curricula, few others have taken this concept as far as Mapleton; and, given the additional resources provided by this grant, the district is likely to be come more of a "lighthouse" district in the years to come.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This is a personalized learning program at every level. It begins with students and parents choosing the theme of the school their kids attend and offering free transportation to every school in the district. It goes on to individual assessments and individual rates of progress through the curriculum. It also includes free choices of which intersessions to attend and whether they want to attend any of them. Finally it allows mastery of courses to be proven through demonstrations to adults in grades 1-10, and by nationally recognized exams in grades 11 and 12.

The design of the project is totally responsive to the grant requirements; the application has no major weakness; and the project is worthy of funding in every respect.

Total	210	209
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0383CO-2 for Mapleton Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Mapleton provides a comprehensive and coherent vision that strengthens their prior reforms in small design schools and the four core educational assurance areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong strategies to prepare students for college and careers such as adoption of Common Core State Standards, using ACT assessment results to measure college readiness, and requiring seniors to apply to college. Strong data systems such as web-based Aimsweb, recommended by National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI), and district student data system, Infinite Campus, to measure student growth, and inform teachers and principals with data to improve instruction. Adoption of the Danielson Teaching Framework demonstrates strong, comprehensive approach to develop and increase effective teachers and principals through the district and project. District-wide Year Round School calendar provides more instructional days and intersessions for all schools, and may have most impact on lowest-achieving students and schools. <p>Mapleton provides a clear and credible approach using a district-wide Year Round School reform to increase instruction by 23 more days and 15 intersessions to personalize, deepen, and make learning more relevant to accelerate student achievement for all schools and students.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Mapleton plan demonstrates a high-quality LEA and school-level implementation plan, based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong Year Round School reform model will serve all schools, except two charters and contract schools, in district-wide participation consisting of 14 schools, approximately 6,146 students, grade levels from PreK-12, and 322 educators. Extensive data charted school demographics for participating 14 schools and educator counts. Also applicant indicated the reform will serve a high-need student population with overall 79.6% low-income families. Mapleton is a district with an increasing high-need student population currently including 72% free/reduced lunch, 68% minority, and 30% English Language Learners. <p>Specific strategies were not clear on how Mapleton will strengthen weak small-school design implementations.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Mapleton provides a high-quality plan for a LEA-wide, Year Round School reform model to serve all schools. Charter and contract schools are not included.</p> <p>The plan included a Logic Model chart with root-cause analysis and findings, including both strengths and concerns to specifically address for successful reform.</p> <p>Mapleton's LEA-wide, student-centered Year Round School calendar will provide 23 more days to personalize learning, differentiate instruction, and 15 Intersessions to make learning relevant and accelerate achievement outcomes for all students district-wide.</p>		

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Mapleton's vision is likely to accelerate and improve student learning and performance as demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive data and targets charted for overall and subgroups with baseline, grant term and one year post-grant, for summative and growth performance, and high school graduation rates. Data presented for grades 3-12 in reading, math, and writing. College enrollment targets charted for overall population, with subgroups not currently available and baseline to be established in school year 2012. • Based on baseline performance in 2011 and 5% percent gain per year, summative targets for overall and subgroups in 3-10 grade levels in reading, writing, and math, are ambitious and achievable. • Based on baseline performance in 2011 and 5% decrease per year, targets for decreasing achievement gaps for subgroups in grades 3-10 in reading, math, and writing, are quite ambitious but achievable. • Given the baseline rates in 2011, and at least 6% increase goal per year, the targets in high school graduation rates are quite ambitious, particularly for subgroups, yet achievable. However, Mapleton's Early College School program is designed with a five-year high school/associates degree program. With the high school diploma and associates degree awarded concurrently at the end of the fifth year, this lowers the district high school graduation rate. • Based on baseline performance in 2011, and 5% increase goal per year, the targets for overall college enrollment goals are ambitious and achievable. 		

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapleton presents a clear record of success in trendline for advancing student learning and achievement, evidenced by 5-year data chart showing both district and state assessment achievement trendline results in reading, writing, math and science. In the midst of increasing high-need students, Mapleton increased student performance while the state performance levels remained flat. • Data presented for achievement gaps by race for grade 3, 7 and 10 in ELA over past 5 years low and flat performance in narrowing achievement gaps. Data for achievement gaps in Math limited to one confusing chart based on proficiency and gender groups. • Data presented for graduation (49.7% to 58.9%), dropout (8.2% to 5.1%), and college enrollment (81%) rates indicate a strong improvement across years 2009-12; however, Mapleton noted the unacceptable low graduation rate, and high dropout rate. • Mapleton's success is demonstrated in district-wide small-by-design schools reform strategy. • Charted data provides an example for two increasingly high-need (65-88%; 42-69% percent based on free/reduced lunch status) and low-achieving schools (Adventure Expeditionary, and Early College) and shows slow-paced, variable student growth but clearly increased achievement levels as of 2012. • Mapleton provides a strong approach to make student performance data available to educators, and parents using the Infinite Campus system, and the state Colorado Growth model for parent student-level data access through the state dept of education. An additional, ambitious strategy with a planned pilot this year in one school for the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) program linking student performance data to specific skill building activities parents can do with their children; however, it is not identified whether it is a lowest-achieving school or not. <p>Overall, Mapleton provided evidence for record of success justifying high range score of 12.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Mapleton demonstrates transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments through extensive Expenditures Summary Report for 2011-12, posted on district website. This includes the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on review of US Census Bureau classification of F-33 IES survey, strong compliance included actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, including teachers, denoted Title-I, denoted Para, Extra Duty, Phys Ed, Art, Instructional Para, Substitute, Partnership, Media Aide, Permanent Sub, etc. • Included all actual personnel salaries at the school level instructional and support staff, and administrative staff (School Directors, 		

office staff, Security Officer, Internship Coordinator, etc.); not limited to instructional staff only; strong breakdown for salaries and benefits.

- Included all actual personnel salaries at school level (previously noted above).
- Included all actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level including professional and technical (property, supplies and materials, field trips, heat, and electricity, etc.).

Mapleton goes beyond posting salaries by posting certified teacher vacancies, curriculum adoption by locally elected School Board, and publicly displays 30 days comments. The RTT-D proposal was made available at School Board meeting, parent newsletter, District Accountability Advisory Committee (DAAC), and School Accountability Advisory Committee meetings.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)

10

8

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant demonstrate strong conditions and sufficient autonomy under state legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement Mapleton's project, evidenced by:

- Colorado as a local control state requires locally elected school boards with authority for choices on curriculum, graduation requirements, school calendars, personnel, and classroom policy. This represents strong state and local context for implementing Mapleton district-wide YRS reform calendar in RTTD proposal.
- Colorado received state RTT Phase II grant indicating overall state context for educational reform, including new Colorado Academic Standards, aligned with Common Core State Standards.
- State context by Colorado Senate Bill 191 prohibits forced teacher placements and requires principal agreement with placements that will support implementation of YRS reform model in the district.
- State context may be limited by Colorado as open enrollment state where out of district students may choice-in to attend Mapleton District, as space available; thus, applicant may need to support out-of-district students as well as in-district students, and may conflict with targeted in-district student support in proposal.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strong stakeholder engagement and support is reflected by the following:

- Feedback and response from various stakeholders is represented; however, unclear response to teacher and student feedback about impact of calendar on teachers with children in other districts, and student college courses and summer jobs
- Provided numerous letters of support across key stakeholders including parent organizations, student advisory group, university, early learning organization, business, government, politicals, etc.
- Letter from state dept of education indicated review of proposal and project aligned with state initiatives; however, response limited by comment sheet is not included.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

- Strong analysis of current status, including extensive logic model chart with root-cause analysis, for implementing personalized learning environments, using six performance measures including state, formative, and summatives, qualitative summaries and teacher feedback, indicating slow-paced, incremental increasing student achievement while still below state levels.
- Strong identification of overall barriers to accelerated student achievement and personalized learning environments including summer learning loss contributes to achievement gaps for majority high-need, low-income population (79.6%); shorter school year (165 days) compared to any other Denver metro district (173); and lack of fidelity in implementation of school designs at the student level.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

Mapleton presents a high-quality plan for student learning in the YRS reform project, demonstrated through the following factors:

- Strong planning for Intersessions that will deepen the student learning experience and enhance relevance for learning to achieve personalized goals and interests, access to diverse contexts and educational environments, and expand universal skills and traits such as creativity and teamwork.
- Double and triple dose instruction, i.e. two and three hours compared to standard one hour, will provide more instruction based on student-level data for high-need students.
- Extensive teacher training and coaching, and full-time school model designers to increase degree and ensure instructional designs are personalized, students graduate on-time meeting college and career-ready standards, while using digital and online resources such as iPads and Apple TVs.
- Innovative district-wide student-centered calendar, adding 23 instructional days, is the pinnacle to personalized sequence of content for each student, and tailored interventions for high-need students.
- Comprehensive student data tools in Aimsweb and Infinite Campus system with parent access, provide ongoing feedback for monitoring student mastery of standards, planning tools such as Individual Career and Academic Planning and EXPLORE to identify career and college recommendations based on student strengths and weaknesses.
- High-quality strategies for high-need students such as post secondary options coaches, ACT prep courses, Colorado Youth for a Change for at-risk dropouts with Response to Intervention.
- Mechanisms including high school students trained in Google Docs, and College in Colorado program for students to track and monitor student learning progress.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)

20

19

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Mapleton demonstrates a high-quality plan by:

Extensive differentiated teacher training such as new teacher induction program for new teachers and variety of professional learning communities to increase effective implementation of personalized student learning environments with strategies to meet each student's academic needs to ensure all students can graduate on time and college- and career-ready.

Comprehensive professional development such as direct coaching, curriculum training, and individual mentors, demonstration classrooms, and teaching video clips to increase capacity to adapt content and instruction and opportunities to common and individual academic needs and interests, and optimal contemporary learning approaches through collaborative, projects, and interaction.

Unique YRS calendar and array of assessment tools provide more time to frequently measure and analyze student data toward college- and career-ready standards and graduation to accelerate achievement through improved teaching practices.

Strong feedback to improve teacher practice and effectiveness using recent adoption of recognized Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching with proven continuum to support instruction and student learning.

Rigorous new teacher and principal evaluation systems starting August 2013 provide feedback on effectiveness, recommendations, and supports, and interventions as needed for improvement, with at least 50% of the evaluation based on student achievement data.

Specified interim, formative, curricular, NWES MAPs assessments, and school director data dives provide actionable information combined with coaches and interventionists to identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests.

Provided high quality learning resources both instructional content and assessments over recent years, including digital learning resources in every core content area, as well as new Tier II and III interventions, aligned to college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements. Programs for teachers visiting master teacher classroom program, and Reading Together pairs older and younger students below grade level.

Detailed information from teacher evaluation systems and classroom walkthroughs provide school leaders and school leadership teams access to improve effective teaching, and cultivate continuous school improvement climate.

Strong professional development and training system with additional School Support Team Model to support continuous improvement at the school level, with teams of administrators, school directors, teachers and parents to analyze data for challenges and solution for increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps.

Compelling commitment to increase effective teachers through adoption of Danielson Framework for Teaching, and professional development based on teacher and principal evaluation information and student achievement results. Mapleton offers \$1,000 signing bonus in hard-to-staff, subject and specialty areas; however, they have not had to use this incentive over the past five years.

However, the application was unclear on what strategies and responsible parties will implement specific improvements in the small-school designs in the project.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: Mapleton provides a high-quality plan demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong, strategic district RTTD priority with central office organized to support project schools, including new administrator for school improvement and data analysis, and RTTD Project Director reporting to Assistant Superintendent. School Directors/Principals will have strong flexibility and autonomy in staffing models and school-level budgets. Strong school-level autonomy for School Leadership Teams to decide daily school schedules that allow school-level planning and scheduling activities in their schools. Provided multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards through unique school designs and inquiry-based curriculum. Also, authentic assessment methods, presentations, research, projects, and lab demonstration. Applicant evidenced commitment with school reform designs based on needs of the majority high-need student population, and new learning resources specifically designed for high-need students, including students with disabilities and ELL, such as SEPUP (Science), It's About Time! Science, and FOSS (Science), SpellRead, Read180, and Lindamod-Bell. 		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: Mapleton presents a high-quality plan with strong LEA and school infrastructure to support implementation of project, based on the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong universal school, student, teacher, and parent access to same tools, content, PD, instructional technology, and resources to ensure access, regardless of income. Standard tools and learning resources provided through School Improvement Grants to ensure appropriate levels of technical support. Differentiated weighted budget ensures funding, staffing, and resources to high-need students and schools. Strong information technology access and supports via student and parent training for Infinite Campus student data system, and future update for download allowing students and parents to choose export format (PDF, Excel, etc.). However, plan limited by unclear strategies to ensure low-income students have Internet access at home. Ensures Mapleton's data systems already interoperable in human resources, student information, budget, and instructional improvement. 		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	14
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: Mapleton provides a high-quality plan for continuous improvement based on the following strategies: <p>Strong strategy provides timely and regular feedback to share communication on progress toward project goals through monthly visiting School Support Teams (SST), District Learning Services, dedicated position for RTTD Project Director, School Directors Leadership Meeting, and Superintendent's Cabinet. Feedback data will be measured by school level and assessment data-based trends and outliers, with mid-course corrections. However, plan provides limited specificity for feedback process in professional development.</p> <p>Strong communication sharing data with staff and community through RTTD Performance Summary report. This is also posted on district public website and school newsletters to key stakeholders and families. SST regular meetings include teachers and parents where they may regularly receive information about progress and funded initiatives by RTTD.</p>		

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Mapleton provides a high-quality plan with strong strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with both internal and external stakeholders evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed communication plan (Appendix 5), particularly important faculty/staff and community/parent group Listening Tours that will support successful communication and engagement for this district-wide Year Round School reform process. Responsible party identified in Chief Communication Officer. Reached out to target audiences and constituents including internal (students, parents, teachers, Board of Education, District Advisory Committee, Parents in Action, etc.), and external (business, government, elected officials, non-parents, prospective parents, media, community/service/faith-based organizations) stakeholders. 		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Mapleton provided over 14 performance measures across PK-12 in reading, math, attendance, behavior, college and career readiness that provide timely, rigorous, formative and summative information. The following example illustrates strong measure descriptions: Pre-K level for reading and math will use Teaching Strategies GOLD, 38-objectives predictors of school success, aligned to Common Core Standards, fully bilingual too with reports for parents, can track student subgroup performance, and measure will be reviewed annually as sufficient gauge for implementation progress, and correlation with future PALS and TCAP scores.</p> <p>Mapleton completed data charts for numerous performance measures across grade-levels including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students: Number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, with highly effective, and effective teacher and principal. PreK: Teaching Strategies GOLD age-appropriate measure of literacy and math K-1: PALS for reading; Everyday Math Assessments for math 2nd-3rd: Measures of Academic Progress (MAPs) for literacy and math PreK-3: Behavior referrals and Attendance measures 4th-8th: MAPs for reading and math, attendance, and behavior referrals 9th-10th: MAPS for 9-10th literacy and math 11th: ACT scores for literacy and math 12th: Accuplacer Diagnostic for literacy and math, also used by colleges college readiness/placement; attendance and behavior. <p>Target goals are set around a 5% gain. While ambitious, particularly for subgroups, with the Year Round School calendar, will be achievable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted baseline for student growth data for teacher and principal effectiveness in grades PK-3 and 11-12 not available until 2013-14. Noted baseline data for Accuplacer Diagnostic for 12th grade literacy and math college readiness to be conducted in Spring 2013. Some data by subgroup for students were not completed for FAFSA; however, all seniors required and completed application to college, and all accepted to one college in 2012. 		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Mapleton demonstrates strong commitment to evaluate effectiveness of primary RTTD funded initiatives by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year Round School calendar effectiveness will be based on accelerated student achievement in mastery of standards. Intersessions will be evaluated based on surveys. It is not indicated whether the surveys will be administered to student, teacher and/or parents. School level implementation will be evaluated using fidelity evaluations and notably, conducted in collaboration with design developers and internal staff. Noted to also evaluate effectiveness of strategies through Continuous Improvement process described in (E-1). 		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
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(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: Mapleton presented a strong budget with overall and project-level budget summaries, and itemized costs based on the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong budget identified all funds that will support the project, primarily RTTD grant, and notably, LEA funding. Budget describes reasonable and sufficient costs to implement proposal. Describes all funds to support the implementation, including total revenue and sources. Identifies costs as one-time investment or recurring by year in the grant. Budget clearly focused on Year Round School calendar model for long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environment. 58% of the budget dedicated to the YRS extended calendar, and 31% for the Intersessions, and 9% for the lowest implementation of small school design. Mapleton's budget matches the proposal narrative to support implementation, justifying a high rating score.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: Mapleton provided a high-quality budget plan for sustainability based on the following strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided a strong 3-Year Budget for sustainability of the RTTD reforms, focused on the extended school calendar and intersessions, after the grant years. Credible sustainability for extended school year based primarily on past and projected increasing student enrollments. However, sustainability for the extended school year based on re-assignment of existing general fund dollars may depend on project outcomes and limited by availability of general district funds for re-assignment. Sustainability of Intersessions from supports obtained from private foundations, partnerships with local non-profit organizations and competitive grants seem feasible and appropriate match between purpose (educational Intersessions) and funding source (partnerships and local grants). 		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: Mapleton presents a Competitive Preference Priority, justifying a high range rating score, based on the following strong strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong support in ongoing Learn Well initiatives provide students with critical access to physical health services, mental health services, community infrastructure/safety, food security for families, before and after bell, and job and financial support services. Strong support to address Mapleton's students' social-emotional and mental health needs. Mapleton will continue partnerships with two non-profits designed to improve the social-emotional and mental health of children and youth. Commitment to increase student social competence/skills and reduce behavior referrals for high-need population. Strong strategy with both district and organization's funding plans. Distinguished partnerships and programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Incredible Years in partnership with Invest in Kids, a non-profit organization committed to improving the health and well-being of Colorado's most vulnerable children. The program is designed to increase a child's success at school and home by promoting positive parent, teacher, and child relationships. The program will be implemented in every Pre-K and Kindergarten classroom in Mapleton. The program includes a classroom component, a parent group, and teacher classroom management component. The program is a model "Blueprint" program designated by the Office of Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. Notably, Mapleton will use its own funds, as well as those raised by Invest in Kids. No RTTD funds will be used for this program. The Community Reach School-Based Therapists Program, in partnership with Community Reach, is a county-wide provider of mental health services. Mapleton will offer school-based therapy for individual students and families. The district and Community Reach will share the cost of seven, full-time therapists to serve 15 schools, grades PK-12. Notably, the district will pay \$12,000 per therapist and Community Reach will absorb the balance of the cost. Students will be referred to counselors by teachers or other staff. Therapists will be available during and after school hours to conduct individual and group sessions. Therapists will be 		

supervised by Community Reach.

- The partnerships will use existing tracker in the LEA's Infinite Campus data system for the following indicators:
 - PreK Social Competence Teacher Scale will be completed by teachers at beginning and end of year to evaluate social-emotional skills of every student, with a third party evaluator, Omni Evaluation.
 - Middle and High School Surveys will be administered in grades 6-12 to all students once a year to evaluate a range of youth behaviors. The Adams County Youth Initiative analyzes the data and provides a report to the district each year.
 - Behavior data will be reported by the teacher and School Directors.
 - Graduation data will be reported at the school and district level.

Strong School Support Teams will use the data to target students facing significant challenges and use its resources, including a full-time prevention specialist to improve results for all participating students. Results are improved over time as indicated in annual pre-post results analyzed each year and reviewed in annual meetings to collaboratively determine ways to improve the Incredible Years program quality. Mapleton receives data on student progress and the district Assistant Director of Support Services will communicate quarterly with the liaison to discuss potential improvements in the Community Reach Therapist program.

HIPAA rules are followed to protect confidentiality in mental health services. The partnerships and program represent overall integration of services with education system. Further, Community Reach therapists may be called to participate in threat assessments or school-wide situations, like the death of a staff or student.

The needs and assets of participating students are assessed with the partnership's goals for improving the education, family, and community supports identified by the partnership. Notably, all Mapleton Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers will be trained on the Social Competence Teacher Scale, that provides targeted, actionable intervention for teachers, assisted by Invest in Kids coaches. All school directors have access to the district prevention specialist in assessing specific social-emotional needs of high-need students. Teachers may refer families to the school-based therapist in Community Reach program. Mapleton astutely starts the support and intervention in social-emotional at earliest education level, and reaches out to all students and families.

To identify, inventory and ensure that the needs and assets of the school and community are aligned with improved social-emotional of children, the district will continue to participate in the Adams County Youth Initiative, as well as district School Support Team process to continually evaluate social-emotional needs in the schools.

The decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of participating students, and support improved results include essential county-wide coordination, as Mapleton has a high 40% mobility rate. Mapleton uses a strong Problem Solving Team approach and progress monitoring documented with an electronic system for Response to Intervention.

Mapleton will continue its strong commitment to engage families through participation in decision-making at School Support Team sessions including one dedicated session per year on social, emotional, and behavioral supports.

Mapleton routinely assesses progress, program impact and to resolve challenges and problems by closely monitoring behavior data throughout the school year, and making comparisons to past years to ensure program efficacy, as well as using the School Support Team process. Mapleton identified ambitious and achievable improvement results for the social-emotional health in family and community, and increased graduation rates as performance measures for the proposed population-level. Social-Emotional Competence Teacher Scale with several past years of baseline data, the measure can be used to monitor the effectiveness of the program in comparison to past years. Behavioral referral data for social-emotional difficulties that tend to manifest in classroom behavior problems, and the district has multiple years of baseline data so the measure can be used to monitor the effectiveness of the program in comparison to past years. With Individual Treatment plans, HIPAA regulations apply; however, every student receiving individual counseling will receive a treatment plan, monitored and updated by each school therapist to ensure student progress.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Distinguished proposal by Mapleton Public Schools with a high-quality plan demonstrated by the following strong strategies:

- Compelling district-wide Year Round School model approach designed to deepen and personalize student learning to accelerate student achievement, extending notable prior reforms of district-wide small-by-design schools.
- Specified goals and budget directly support components for successful Year Round School reform model, with additional LEA

funding to support proposal.

- Significant plan to reform and improve teaching capacity in core curriculum and student mastery of standards with strong commitment indicated by adoption of the Charlotte Danielson Teaching Framework.
- Specified activities, including contemporary technologies, oversight and monitoring through school and district teams, and identified responsible parties support successful project implementation with high level of fidelity.
- Extensive data support achieving credible, systematic target deliverables and benchmarks within timeline.
- Numerous letters of support from a spectrum of stakeholders across education, community, government, non-profits, and state dept of education.

Mapleton presents a Year Round School reform model with potential as national prototype for small districts, with high-need student population.

Total	210	194
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0383CO-3 for Mapleton Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The vision of Mapleton is to extend the progress they have made in the past 10 years by closing 8 schools and re-opening 16 smaller, more personalized schools that offer more student choice. Those recently restructured schools will use RTTT-D funds to extend learning by expanding learning time (through the adoption of a more student-centered calendar that eliminates large blocks of summer time away from instruction) and increase the number of instructional days in the year. The vision also includes making learning more personalized by integrating 21st technology and increasing practitioners' ability to differentially use instructional strategies to better meet student needs. In combination these have the potential to significantly enhance learning if the quality of the added days are focused on better instruction. The only shortcoming is that the vision does not add much detail about what will be done to ensure that the added days already on the calendar all include high quality instruction.</p> <p>The applicant also makes the case that the vision connects to the four core assurance areas. A compelling argument was made that increased standards need to be aligned with instructional activities of teachers. Collaboration with the state's sample curriculum project seems to be a healthy first step in that direction. Also, the recognition that data systems won't be of much value if there is not a concomitant investment in staff to carry them out and training for teachers in how to use them is an important constructive first step. The district maintained that teachers could be strengthened by a more competitive salary schedule, a new teacher evaluation system, and professionalization by working year round. The case would have been strengthened if more details would have been offered about specific plans for making teachers more competent. Finally, the proposal makes the argument that the long summer down time is particularly challenging for the low income, at-risk student population within the district. This is convincing.</p> <p>The response to this criterion warranted a high range score of 9.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The case was made that all district schools (save two charter and contract schools) will be involved in the reforms. So</p>		

implementation will include everyone. Also, the application made the case that the right reforms are in place from earlier restructuring that redesigned the entire district into smaller, research-based school reform models adopted by all the schools. The hard work of early reform has already taken place. Furthermore, parents and students have significant choice about what school they will attend, so that if a school does not perform as well as they hoped, they can simply vote with their feet. The district is transparent about the fact that some schools have done a better job than others with implementation of their adopted reform model and that with this grant a particular effort will be made to help schools do a better job with implementation and institutionalization. The only shortcoming of their implementation plan was that the plan fails to offer many details about implementation shortcomings to date and what they might do to strengthen that. The strengths of this plan outweigh any weaknesses so this response was assigned a score of 8 in the high range.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

9

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The logic model offered by the Mapleton application outlines three root causes for low performance that extensive community deliberation produced. The first was that the short school year exacerbated learning loss. This is a compelling argument. When there are only 165 days of learning less can be learned than if there are 180 or even 200 days of learning. The only shortcoming of that argument is that increasing the number of days does not necessarily mean the quality of instruction will necessarily improve. The second cause of low learning was while strong reform models had been adopted in the district schools, not all staff had fully implemented those models. So better fidelity in using the models will produce more differentiated, personalized instruction. Targeting resources to help ensure better implementation is an important objective and the transparency of acknowledging that not all schools have been equally successful with implementation is refreshing. The only weakness was that this reviewer would have liked to see more details for how implementation might be improved. Finally, the application makes the case for a third lever to improve student learning: extended learning time yielding increased student achievement.

The combination of these three arguments produces a strong case for how this district might have a significant impact on improving learning of its students. Thus, this score was given a 9 in the high range.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

10

9

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application provides projected goals for the four above indicators (summative assessments, both status and growth, with improvements of 20 points or 20 percent across grade levels and subjects), achievement gaps (decreasing most gaps to almost zero for subgroups except for the few cases where the largest gaps can only be meaningful cut to a half or a third of where they have been), graduation rates (rising dramatically from near 60% to almost 85%, with the exception of special education students who will improve from 41% to 67%), and college enrollment rates (rising from 54% to 74%, with no subgroup breakdowns). The numbers include meaningful and ambitious improvements in Reading, Writing and Math assessments; a decrease in gaps for Hispanics, Low-income students, and English Language learners; improved graduation rates; and college enrollments (although the latter offers no breakdowns by subcategory). These are commendable. The biggest challenge will be knowing whether the reforms proposed will actually lead to those hoped for changes. The changes that are outlined in the plan will be associated with the improvements in outcomes, but not necessarily caused by them. But this is a challenge that is not unique just to the Mapleton plan.

This criterion was assessed a 9 in the high range.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application asks for evidence of reform activity in three areas. Thus, the evaluation of the plan will involve distributing points across each of these on a five point scale (i.e., weighting each equally), to arrive at potential aggregate score of 15.

(a) The Mapleton application makes a strong case for very consistent five year growth across almost all standardized achievement indicators (8th grade math is the one exception). These patterns of significant growth are despite the statewide trends of flat performance and the added challenge of significant demographic changes (i.e., an increasing low income population). These data are consistent across not just math and English, but also writing and science. The text talks about,

but offers no longitudinal data, supporting efforts to close the achievement gap. There is also evidence provided of significant improvements in high school graduation rates over the three most recent years for which there is comparable data. Finally, college enrollments have jumped dramatically in the district, although there are only two data points (2005 and 2012); the application asks for five years of trend data. The significant improvements far outweigh any missing data, so the application warrants a high score (4 of 5).

(b) The Mapleton School district has a strong track record of significant school reform over the past ten years with their innovative small-by-design schools. They not only have made big changes in their lowest achieving schools; they have also reformed all their schools by closing all their old schools and re-opening new, smaller schools. This effort produces a maximum score of 5.

(c) This third criterion asks for the applicant to provide evidence of past efforts to make student achievement data available to students, educators, and parents. The proposal provided no documentation of data being made available to students. On the other hand, the district provided evidence of wide-spread availability of data for local educators. There are multiple data sources available in real time, but equally important there are staff and training available to help teachers use that data and the potential for teachers to link achievement data to their lessons and instructional approaches, in addition to just the state standards. This increases dramatically the potential that the data may be meaningful for routine instructional planning. Finally the district has made the case that not only is student data available for review, but that through the APTT systems, parents can link their own students' weaknesses to a set of home-based activities, increasing the likelihood that meaningful instruction might take place in the home. This section warrants a high score (4 of 5).

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application asks for documentation of transparency with respect to four pieces of financial data. Appendix 1 of the proposal details the district response. The spreadsheet charts make clear that personnel salaries for all staff are available. Finally, there is evidence provided on non-personnel expenditures at the school level. In addition to just transparency of budget information, the application also documents a wider transparency about district operations. For example, all staff vacancies are advertised, curriculum adoption is posted on the web, and the details of the RTT-D application process was shared with the community. This criterion was assessed maximum points.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Three conditions support a maximum score on this criterion. First, there is a strong state climate of reform encouraged and promoted by an entire division devoted to reform and its success in state-level RTTT funding. Second, the district has a strong commitment to move even beyond what the state is encouraging, evidenced by the already existing small-by-design schools that appear to increase the likelihood of personalized learning environments. Third, the district has developed a particularly close relationship with the State Department of Education as they have moved to reform their schools, although the Commissioner of Education makes no mention of this in the letter of support. This is key to any continued efforts to expand the reforms in the ways this application is hoping to support.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Mapleton School District makes a strong case for meaningful engagement of stakeholders. Most impressive is that the district is not trying to change a culture with little past history of engagement, but rather to extend what already appears to be an ongoing effort to reach out to a range of constituent groups as they try to strengthen their small-by-design schools, increase the number of days of instruction in the school calendar, and expand enrichment opportunities for students beyond the normal school day. The letters were not only impressive by their breadth, but also the clarity of the writers' understanding of the intent of this reform undertaking. The most eloquent of those letters was the one written by students. The only flaw, however, appears to be any detailed documentation of teacher support. The application makes the case that teachers have been involved in the decisions about the adopted school reform models, have worked hard in the implementation, and will continue to be an integral part of planning for both better implementation of those models and the alteration of the schedule to increase learning time. Yet, there was no detail given for how that might take place, particularly in light of the fact that these changes of a longer school day will have a significant impact on teachers' work lives. The one omission, was any letter of support from the Mapleton Education Association (MEA), despite the text of the proposal stating there was such a letter. The

strengths of this engagement plan outweigh this one weakness so this criterion was assessed a high score of 8.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The Mapleton RTT-D application makes the case in words for three needs and important learning gaps: summer learning loss, uneven reform model implementation, and a shortened school year. All of these are well argued in the text. The proposal offers clear and convincing data to support the shortened school year, with the district having almost two fewer weeks of instruction than districts in the surrounding region, and probably even more discrepancy when viewed on a national level. However, for the other two needs -- summer learning loss and uneven reform model implementation -- the text makes the case for both of these happening (i.e., their logic says there should be improvements) but there are no quantitative data to back that these needs exist or that research confirms they can be remedied by their proposed interventions.

This criterion was assessed with a score of 4 in the high range.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Mapleton response to learning that engages and empowers all learning in a more personalized environment begins with revisiting the three key elements of their plan: (1) deepening reform implementation at each school, (2) increasing teaching and learning time by adding more instructional days and adopting a student-centered calendar, and (3) incorporating 15 more days of enriched learning during intersession times (when the whole school is not in session). With respect to the first element, the proposal does an admirable job of facing up to the reality that not all teachers are equally skilled in implementing the plans of the multiple small-by-design schools. The plan suggests the generic tools of training, coaching and professional learning communities will go a long way to strengthening implementation. While Appendix 4 does differentiate how each school might incorporate these three strategies, it still leaves undefined how they might tackle variation in implementation. For example, the proposal notes that most of the PLCs are all content based, but just having teams across a district with content expertise will not necessarily provide the depth of thinking about changes needed to instructional delivery that will produce enhanced model implementation. Likewise, the proposal devotes a great deal of attention to the fact that teachers, with their limited calendar, do not have the time to personalize and deepen the learning experience for students. While more time is better than less time, more time does not necessarily equate to more high quality learning time (i.e., more is not always better). For example, what processes would be put in place to ensure that more instructional time produces more ongoing and regular feedback? Finally, the discussion about using intersession time to provide students with enriched learning opportunities (the arts, hands-on experiences, etc.) directly speaks to the goal of personalized and deepened learning, but the tension with also wanting to provide more intervention with basic learning deficiencies in reading, writing and mathematics may conflict with that goal.</p> <p>The strengths of this section of the plan outweigh the noted deficiencies and support a score in the high range of 17.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Mapleton proposal for this section places up front five key assumptions that drive their vision: (1) that the student population is predominantly high-needs, (2) that the district has a young teaching staff, (3) that the widely divergent school models will require differentiated approaches to professional development, (4) that while instructional delivery may vary across school models, the core curriculum standards will remain common, and (5) that it is a core element of the identity of the district that each school model its principles. These will undoubtedly create tensions when prioritizing teacher development, but the district recognizes the necessity of some healthy levels of tension. Across all the specific plans for educator development can be traced the common elements of more time to plan and teach, year-round job-embedded professional development, teachers needing high skill levels in the instructional tools unique to their school models, teachers being able to more effectively link instructional strategies with student outcome data, and the necessity of school designs being aligned with Common Core Standards. What is missing from any of the discussion is any acknowledgement that there may be some common best practices regarding such topics as how to engage students and promote higher order thinking when delving deeper into content.</p>		

The proposal does an excellent job of acknowledging that teachers do not come to their professions with all the tools they will need to become highly effective, but rather that learning for educators is a career-long endeavor. Resources and activities in the plan point to five key elements: (1) professional development needs to be differentiated, ongoing and job-embedded, (2) training alone will not help teachers -- they also need coaching to help them practice and refine what they have learned in their professional development, (3) professional growth is best fostered when teachers are given the opportunity to plan and have input about their own practice -- this is where the professional learning communities become a central element of this plan, (4) use of data to inform decisions is important to improved practice, but having more data is not enough -- the plan also calls for how to link knowledge about the data to high quality instructional strategies, and (5) the teacher evaluation system (including walk throughs and instructional rounds) must also be closely aligned to future professional growth. The Framework for Teaching provides one such avenue for doing that. Taken together, this section of the plan outlines in great detail what the district proposes to do to enhance the quality of their teaching staff. That plan is both ambitious and comprehensive. The school design overview in Appendix 4 and the Action/Work Plan in Appendix 5 also complement and extend the district's thinking on this front, especially with the carefully detailed components of the latter.

The plan calls for administrators to play key roles in the development and implementation of those plans, but what is lacking in the proposal is any detailed plans for how administrators (both district and school-level) will be trained and supported to be the important lynch pins of teacher development.

The overall quality of this section warrants a score of 17 in the high range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	14
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>As noted throughout the proposed plan, the Mapleton School district has a 10 year track record of setting both organizational structures and cultures in place to accommodate the needs and demands of placing school improvement as a high priority. The small size of the district makes it a more manageable operation than typically larger, more bureaucratic school system. But in addition to that history, the district has put into place a number of initiatives that should help ensure that district policies, practices, and rules will support and not detract from facilitating more student-centered learning. At the central office level, the monthly visits to each school (with walk throughs and instructional rounds) should help keep learning as a priority. Also, the appointment of a central office administrator responsible just for school improvement and data analysis is another positive move, as is the proposed appointment of a RTT-D project director (as reflected in the Appendix 9 job description). The proposal claims that school directors have a high level of autonomy and are expected to use a student focus as the touchstone for all their decisions, although just putting a new label on the position and saying that is so does not always insure that will happen. Likewise, the school leadership teams are reported to have autonomy over daily school schedules, although there are no specifics about how that has been working in practice. The inquiry- and project based-orientation of the new school models supports the notion that students already have, and will continue to do so, multiple times and ways to demonstrate mastery. Finally, The fact that each school has its own unique identity and approach to learning with autonomy to make that happen, means that resources and practices should be more adaptable and accessible to all students. Of course, all of that assumes that a good fit is made between the students and the school model they select. The application makes the case that extra effort is taken to encourage that strong fit. These justify a high score of 14.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The Mapleton plan maintains that due to the demographics of the district, there are not the usual pockets of inequity with some neighborhoods having significantly more or less wealth (and other resources) than others. Also, the weighted funding for schools means that if there are any imbalances, that the high-needs students are favored with more fiscal resources. While all students have access to all the programs and resources of those programs, what is not as clear in the proposal is what measures the district is taking to ensure that everyone takes advantage of all those opportunities. One of the more impressive resources was the partnership with the local library system to incorporate a new library on the combined campus of 5 of the district's 16 schools. That partnered resource sounds like it is structured and organized in a way to provide maximum benefit to the community members. The proposal detailed ways in which technology support will be equitably distributed across all stakeholders. That plan is solid but the proposal asked for larger technical support. So, for example, the plan would be strengthened by clarifying what technical support teachers will need to ensure that the coaching they receive around implementation of their model is equitably distributed across the district. The plan also calls for the use of small</p>		

learning communities but no descriptions are provided of the technical support needed so that maximum outcomes will derive from the work of these small learning communities. The plan notes that interoperable data systems are already in place, and the the district's information technology will have adjustments made to it by the summer of 2013 to allow for the export of information in an open door format and use of that data in other electronic learning systems.

This part of the plan is responsive to the four RTT-D criteria, so a high score of 8 is assigned.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The strength of the district's plan for monitoring, measuring, and sharing information about RTT-D activities is in the recognition that an effective plan requires both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as documentation of both process and outcomes. The key to the Mapleton plan for collecting and reporting those data are the school support teams (made of district and school staff, as well as parents). They will spend two days a month in each classroom and their focus will be on the nature and quality of instruction. Each visit will be accompanied by written feedback with data specific to the school model and the activities undertaken during the visit. The feedback also promises data on professional development, but it is unclear what form that data will take. That whole data collection and report process is a significant undertaking, if done well. In addition, the superintendent's cabinet will meet with key RTT-D district/school staff three times a year to discuss and evaluate progress. Finally, data from all of this will be reported to staff and the community annually in a performance summary. However, there is little information about what form this annual report might take. For example, it is unclear whether the report will include clear data about implementation progress, including evidence of struggles. All of this narrative description in the criterion text is well supported with cross-referenced activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties in the work plan (Appendix 5). This level of detail supports a score in the high range of 13.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This criterion of ongoing communication and engagement is not detailed in the criterion text, but rather is referenced as part of the work plan (Appendix 5). In reviewing the work plan, with cross-referenced activities for criterion E2, the bulk of the communication and engagement is in the form of press releases and newsletters. There is little documentation of what the content might be. For example, there is no evidence that parents will be able to see how well a school's teachers are doing in implementing the reform model adopted by that school. Neither is there any evidence that parents and/or students will be able to see how deeply and how satisfactorily the content and process of intersessions are in reaching the needs of students. For those reasons, this criterion warrants a middle range score of 3.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For this criterion the reviewer counted 16 performance measures by counting math and literacy measures separately at each grade level (e.g. 4-8), as well as the attendance and behavior measures at each level. An important strength of the plan is that the district has baseline data (comparable data prior to RTTT-D implementation) so that comparisons can be made pre-post. The plan articulates a clear rationale for growing achievement approximately 20 points at the various grade levels with different indicators, reducing significant behavioral incidents by nearly a half, and dramatically reducing the proportion of students with more than 10 absences in a school year. The elementary and middle school subgroups on this latter indicator are to be reduced from 33% to 5% while at the high school level the goal is to drop from 63% to 23%. All of those latter numbers are particularly ambitious, but as a whole they appear ambitious yet achievable. The plans for extending learning opportunities by shifting to a student-centered calendar and making sure the reform models already in place have full fidelity of instructional implementation convince this reviewer that the district can reach those goals. Each measure also included a description of how frequently the measures might be used and how that information might be used to make formative adjustments. The standard answer in the plan for using the data from these outcomes to assess implementation progress was to do an annual review.</p> <p>This criterion answer deserves a maximum score of 5.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant agrees to be part of any national evaluation conducted by the department. In this criterion response the district outlined the evaluation tools to be used to assess the three key program components: the calendar change, introduction of intersession activities, and improved implementation of the multiple reform models already adopted by the district's 16 schools. The effectiveness of the year-long, student-centered calendar will be evaluated by change in student achievement. The intersession programming will be assessed by survey data (but there is no documentation of what kinds of survey data and how frequently those will be used). Finally, the implementation improvements will be evaluated by a combination of fidelity evaluations and student achievement data. While it is admirable to be held accountable for student performance, it is a very delicate matter to separate out other factors that might offer alternative explanations for student achievement. It is also further complicated by the introduction of multiple reforms. The plan does not make clear how the applicant will be able to attribute increases in performance as a result of the calendar, better implementation of the models, or some other factor (e.g., the fact that district and school administrators are paying close attention to instruction). The intent of the evaluation, collecting data on progress across the three program components, is admirable and is worthy of a high range score of 4.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget for this project is presented in Section 11 with both detailed budget breakdowns and a set of itemized costs accompanied with descriptions of a rationale for staff positions and further explanations for travel, supplies and equipment. These data are all clearly spelled out and rationales are well documented. They appear reasonable and sufficient. The data are organized around the three key components of the district's plan: deepening the implementation of reform school designs already in place, extension of the calendar year by 23 days for all students, and intersession programming to enrich students' learning experiences. There is also a small additional allocation for support of administration to oversee this work (mostly supported by local funds). From a budgetary perspective, the vast majority of the expenditures will go to extending the calendar year (approximately 58% of the requested funds), with 31% of the funds being assigned to the intersession program, and just under 9% allocated to the deepening of the reform. These allocations seem reasonable. A further analysis of the budget indicates that almost all of the money going to extending the school year will go to cover additional staff salary and benefits. Implicit in this proposal is that all staff will buy into the notion of an extended school year. It is hard to assess the sentiment of the teachers, as their support was missing from the application. The intersession budget (which will hopefully reach about 40 % of the students during each of the three week-long planned sessions) also reflects a healthy portion of the budget (40%) devoted to staff salaries. Again, this assumes that teachers are going to be willing to work not only a longer school year, but also contribute their time and talents during breaks in between the regular instructional calendar. It is hard to assess this assumption without any teacher voice in the proposal. An additional 40% of the intersession budget will be devoted to field trip costs. The final 20% is split almost evenly between normal transportation costs to and from school each day and supplies. The final 9% of the budget will be allocated to deepening the implementation of the in-place school reform models. A breakdown of that budget suggests that 70% will go to staff salaries and benefits (mostly for coaches and other coordinators and 30% will go toward iPad carts).

The criterion text indicates that the district will assume responsibility for professional development costs and enhanced data use that will complement many of the proposed initiatives. But there is no detailed explanation of breakdowns for the small proportion (7%) of the overall budget that is not being funded by federal RTTT-D funds. It is assumed that those are local funds. No mention is made of any foundation support or other special partnerships, but no points are deducted as this is not a required element of the application.

All this detailed documentation suggests it is appropriate to assign a score in the high range of 9.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This criterion response by the applicant makes clear that all post-program funding for the initiative (i.e., after the four years of federal funding) will be entirely absorbed by the increased enrollments, and presumably increased tax revenues generated by any influx of families. It is impossible to judge from the information available at this time whether such an assumption is reasonable or not. This reviewer will give the district the full benefit of the doubt, on the assumption that if implemented well (independent of population growth) students in surrounding communities will be attracted by the open enrollment policies of the

state to attend Mapleton schools. A high range score of 8 was given to this criterion.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Mapleton School district maintains in their application that they already have a dozen social service partners. In their proposal they highlight two such partners (Invest in Kids and Community Reach). They already have programs in place that are beginning to address Tier I (prevention intervention) and Tier II (mid-level intervention) strategies to address the need for social-emotional and mental health supports. Detailed descriptions of what they are doing are already doing are incorporated in the plan. RTT-D funds will allow them to expand and enhance those plans. Those two partnerships are compelling and appropriate for this criterion. The plan goes on to identify four key indicators the District will use (without clearly describing the results -- other than to say they want the four indicator scores to increase). The four indicators include pre-kindergarten social competence scale, middle and high school pro-social behavior scale, the percentage of students with school-based discipline referrals, and four-year graduation rate (as a proxy for the "soft skill" of emotional regulation). These meet the requirements of the criterion. The proposal also describes how the district will track these measures (many they already track through the Infinite Campus data system), how they will use data to make decisions, and how they will use trend data to make improvements over time. While some of the partnerships will encourage integration of services (Mapleton shows a commitment to such efforts), others because of HIPAA requirements can not be shared for integration purposes. The plan points out how the collaborating partners will build district staff capacity not only through initial training, but also ongoing support. Finally, this plan offers a table of baseline and target goals across each measurement indicator. These all appear to be both ambitious and achievable (e.g., social competence scores improving from 4.15 to 4.8, behavioral referrals decreasing from 23% to 7% at the high school, prosocial indicators increasing from 80% to 92%, and graduation rates rising from 55% to 79%).</p> <p>For these reasons this criterion received maximum points.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Mapleton School District has undergone a significant transformation of its instructional programming by assessing the needs of the community and completely restructuring its schools - closing all the traditional schools and opening new small-by-design schools. These were selected in part, if not primarily, to enhance the personalized learning environments of the district's students. Thus, on the face of it, the district appears to have met this Absolute Priority #1 almost before the proposed improvements outlined in this proposal. But in addition, each of the three components of the applicant's plan attempts to further develop personalized learning environments. First, as noted throughout the application, the district is committed to implementing inquiry- and project-based school models that by definition personalize learning environments. As part of the plan the district acknowledges that not all schools have implemented those models with fidelity. So part of their proposed funding would seek additional support to ensure better implementation. Second, the district argues that an important part of a personalized learning environment necessitates depth of learning and exposure to new experiences that a normal school day and year simply cannot support. The intersession part of this application offers enriched learning experiences during three one-week curricula for a subsample (about 40% of the students each intersession) of the district's population. Finally, the short school year (relative to local and national standards) means that the staff struggle with having time to personalize learning environments. By extending the school year by approximately 14% (23 more days added to a 165 day calendar) and spreading the calendar out to avoid a long summer break, the district's plans directly target more time for teachers to personalize student learning. For these reasons, the Mapleton application meets this criterion.</p>		

Total	210	183
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